

Ballard Civic Center Public Meeting Summary – October 28, 2003

More than 150 community members participated in a kick-off meeting for the Ballard Civic Center Park. Seattle Parks and Recreation was represented by Cathy Tuttle, Project Planner, Kathie Huus, Northwest Operations Director, Mareatha Counts, Public Information Officer, and Michael Shiosaki, Pro Parks Development Manager. Barbara Swift and Lisa Corry represented Swift and Associates Landscape Architects.

Parks summarized the project background, schedule, and budget:

- The 2000 Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.47 million for project planning, design and construction of this new 1.3-acre urban park
- The park will be constructed in 2005
- The basis of the park design comes from the Ballard Civic Center Master Plan. Copies of the Master Plan were available at the October 28 meeting for community review and are available at http://www.seattle.gov/realestate/bmc/bmc_master_plan.htm
- Please check the project website for additional information about the Ballard Civic Center park project: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/proparks/projects/BallardMunicipalCenterPark.htm>

Swift summarized concepts of place, vision and program that will guide the design of the new park. Parks relies on community input to develop parks that best fit the character of the neighborhood they are located in. Parks must also pay attention to criteria including public safety, finite construction and maintenance dollars, existing neighborhood plans, and good design aesthetics.

Community members were asked to make recommendations and provide comments on post-it notes at three Open House stations on place, vision, and program. Community comments (over 700 of them!) were transcribed and have been summarized in the following pages. These community comments provide significant information as conceptual designs are developed. At the October 28 meeting, Parks agreed to return to the next community meeting on January 13 with three schematic drawings. Some drawings will include and some will not include a skateboard park element.



Questions and comments please contact Cathy Tuttle (206) 684-7033 cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov
Seattle Parks and Recreation, 800 Maynard Avenue South #300, Seattle 98134.

The next community meetings are from 7-9PM at the Ballard Segway Building
5701 22nd Ave NW (the Segway Building is the old Safeway on the future park site):

Tuesday, January 13, 2004, Review of Conceptual alternatives
Tuesday, March 9, 2004, Review of Preferred Schematic Design

Summary of community comments

(Ballard community comments are italic, Parks comments in bold)

VISION

Previous community plans express visions for this park, such as the 2002 Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan. Your visions are also significant and will be considered.

Ballard residents have great imagination and insight into the character of their community ...

Ballard is a working neighborhood with an industrial history and a little bit of grit ... the park should acknowledge this character

The community recognizes Ballard is changing ... *Ballard is a community in transition. Reflect the diversity of Ballard ... Working class, blue collar (please no excess Scandinavian themes)... Ballard is the new innovative place in Seattle. Let's integrate diverse activities across generations. Let's show the way ... Ballard is a happening place. Restaurants, music venues, art.*

The vision of the park is inclusive ... *This is a true urban park, it needs to be flexible to work with all groups, to change, to evolve ... It is important that the park be for everyone, that everyone will be welcome and feel welcome. There should be a vision beyond the usual cliché pastoral vision of a park. It should have real function, not just be "pretty."*

Safe ... *A safe place to be ... Safe places for kids/different age ... Everyone deserves a safe, comfortable place to be (even bums) and sustainable ... Park should also demonstrate sustainable elements, conservation and stewardship... Green grass, open space, air... Bring in some BIG trees.*

Lively ... *A patch of green for the children to play...vibrancy, attractive design, a meeting place with multiple uses for multiple needs/desires...Let retail uses from new QFC spill into park and enliven it, keep it safe, busy and fun...Dynamic, colorful, whimsical fun play in sun and water*

While still offering places for reflection... *Something meditative... A meditation labyrinth...The heart of Ballard is often busy. The park is a quiet place to rest in the center...A place where an elderly person can sit and watch children play... Essential: A peaceful, quiet "backyard" for all the nearby apartment dwellers, no loud music.*

PLACE

Look at the past and present to build a park in Ballard for the future. The surrounding landscape and community will experience change in the next generation. Many factors create opportunities and constraints, and affect what this place means to us. What are the special characteristics of this place? What are the opportunities and constraints of the site?

The park links the neighborhood ... *Park is a border between commercial Ballard and residential.*

Through transportation... *What is relationship to other transportation systems?... Bike parking – "park and ride" ...Connect with 24th St pier, Burke Gilman, Golden Gardens...Integrate with Monorail planning...22nd is people oriented. Encourage more people and less cars...Primarily a place for residents within walking distance – elderly, families, children.*

Through facing outward to the neighborhood... *Work with QFC to encourage retail uses along the park edge...Mixed uses with sidewalk cafes in back of new QFC spilling into park – let kids, seniors, skaters, walkers, picnickers interact...Reduce Garbage smell behind QFC*

Through environmental awareness... *Respect the water "estuary and basin" of original land. Restore the landscape... Uses separated by grades/different elevations*

And respect for the people who make up the neighborhood *Celebrate new Asian presence in Ballard... Maritime Not Scandinavian... Control noise for neighbors.*

P R O G R A M

Program activities animate the park. They involve individuals and groups. There are many open space opportunities within a half-mile and not all uses are appropriate to this park and the Civic Center. Finite construction and maintenance dollars may mean difficult choices will have to be made. How would you use this park? What activities are essential to this park?

Skateboard Park

There are a variety of reasons people do not want a skateboard park on this property... *Not everyone is a skateboarder.*

- **A verbal promise was made to the community make the skateboard park temporary...** *The Skateboard park was temporarily allowed- the skateboard park would not become permanent! IT WAS PROMISED!*
- **An alternative site might be more appropriate for skaters...** *A location nearby for the skateboard park is preferable (not in this park)*
- **Skateboarding may be too noisy...** *Essential: A peaceful, quiet “backyard” for all the nearby apartment dwellers, no loud music. No noise from skateboards- Sorry Kids!*
- **Skateboarding may not mix well with the large number of nearby senior residents...** *Avoid mixing skateboards, skates, bikes, scooters with elderly, disabled or retired folk who can be easily knocked down by such vigorous activity, who need open space if they live in multiplexes where they do not have yard and gardens in which to soak up the sun and meet their neighbors.*

Community members who supported the skateboard park also had a variety of reasons ...

- **Skateboarding is intergenerational and a great way for old and young to be together...** *The skate bowl gives everyone something to do in the park – plus it is entertainment for onlookers... Please save the bowl - it is a gathering spot for young and old. We enjoy riding it is fun to teach the younger kids to skate and then see them pass us up with their riding skills. Come see some Saturday morning... Let elderly and skaters learn from each other do not isolate groups creating tension and fear*
- **Skateboarding provides an activity for teens who are often underserved...** *The skateboard park is a very important part of the community; it is like a basketball court, shuffle board or any other are where people come together to have fun in a healthy safe environment... The skate park provides a safe, off street place for young kids to enjoy this fast growing and popular activity.*
- **The community invested time, energy and money to build the skateboard park.**
- **The Ballard bowl is a world class facility that people from all over come to use.**
- **It’s a good spectator sport for whole community...** *As a senior I get a lot of pleasure watching the kids skateboard.*
- **Skateboarding activates the park and makes it a safer park...** *Integrate skateboarders as eyes on the park – making it safer for other users, not less safe. Many parks are underused. This one obviously isn’t.*

The community agreed to consider alternatives... *Let’s see some concepts with and without the skateboard park.*

Include an alternative that integrates the skatepark with other desired park elements...*Vision: image a park with active and passive elements that encompasses both urban values and green space. This vision can be accomplished with the existing bowl surrounded by green space. Please don't create a park that is only used by senior citizens. Ballard is getting younger... The temporary skateboard park has become valuable part of Ballard. It is a great place for kids to gather-we need that. It works! Find a way to make it work with seniors and hopefully promote interaction of generations.*

OTHER PARK ELEMENTS

The community was evenly divided about whether or not to have food vendors...*Food vendors Yes let sidewalk cafe spill out from new QFC...No, keep off food off parks, don't undercut existing businesses...Coffee kiosk would be great...No need-plenty of shops one to 2 blocks away, keep park biz free!*

A paved plaza was generally desired...*Limit landscape, must be permeable...Essential! Amphitheater for the Arts...Build in infrastructure for events -- Power and water, driveways and drains...Incorporate poles to hold a movie screen and speakers/outdoor theater.*

Park lights are supported but should be sensitive to neighbors

Trees had universal support...*Please more trees in Ballard, shade trees.*

Lawn space had mixed support. Environmental concerns were key...*A big lawn is not the only option for open space. Use watershed wise options – gardens, nature plants, consider storm water runoff... Lawn Not necessary-this space is limited and other uses would fit the community better...Large lawn is essential...Lawn is great for relaxing in the summer.*

Most community comments supported a park bathroom...*Parks need bathrooms...Especially important for small children and elderly.*

Water is important to Ballard residents

- **Connecting to the environment...***Sustainability: how is storm water treated? Low maintenance and low water use plants...Contained stream?...Need Maritime influence... Ballard = connection to the water. Put in a dynamic water feature for kids to play in the sun. Maybe flat for multiuse.*
- **A water spray fountain had mixed support...***water features end up attracting too many birds (poop) Dirty and stinky...Dynamic water features-spurts of water splash's something for summer... Water feature if enough money...Use a water element as a space/sound bridge between skate park and natural area.*

Several program elements were suggested at the meeting

- **Save existing building...***How many other buildings of this size does the community have available for people to use for events?...This building is a unique asset*
- **Art...***Yes yes! support art. 2% for Arts*
- **Gazebo, bandstand...***to be used as a place for entertainment or getting out of the rain.*
- **Bicycle "hot spot"...***Cycling Hot Spot Make a good, safe, easy to follow connector to Burke-Gilman ...Bicycle destination-water fountains, bike racks, restrooms, place for cyclists to meet.*
- **Games...***Basketball, 4 square, chess.*
- **Connection to local community groups...***Possible "sister city"...Groundswell NW and Rotary may be able to fundraise for features.*
- **Rock climbing wall**
- **Community garden...***would bring people to the park – increase activity and safety.*